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RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 2571

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 MEXICO 001236

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR WHA/MEX, WHA/PDA,  
STATE FOR OES/IHB, PA, CAPRESS  
STATE FOR MED/DASHO (MCFADDEN, RINALDO, KEYES)  
STATE FOR MED/DIR (PENNER)  
STATE FOR DS/IP/WHA  
CDC FOR CCID/NCPDCID, CCID/NCIRD and COGH/DGPPC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CVIS](#) [CASC](#) [KFLU](#) [KSCA](#) [TBIO](#) [MX](#)

SUBJECT: SITREP 11 - H1N1 Outbreak in Mexico

REF: MEXICO 1235

1. (U) SUMMARY  
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The Minister of Health announced May 4 that the number of new H1N1 cases has declined and that there have been no new deaths. However, as Mexico clears a backlog of older H1N1 samples, the total number of confirmed cases has risen to 727 and deaths to 26. Mexican schools will reopen gradually, beginning with universities and high schools on May 7 followed by lower schools and preschools on May 11.

Similarly, the Mayor of Mexico City announced a gradual reopening of businesses and services beginning with restaurants on May 6 and museums and libraries on May 7.

2. (U) FEDERAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS  
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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT: After meeting with state governors, President Calderon announced that universities and high schools will re-open on May 7. All other schools (middle, primary and preschool) will re-open on May 11. He added that schools will be thoroughly disinfected before reopening and stressed the importance of maintaining precautions after schools re-open.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced May 4 that it would send a charter plane to China today to repatriate any Mexican nationals that are currently in quarantine and who would like to return to Mexico. The press reports that 70 Mexican nationals who do not have H1N1 symptoms are currently in quarantine in China.

In a May 3 press interview, President Calderon stressed that the GOM responded quickly and appropriately to the H1N1 outbreak. He added if Mexico had not been so transparent about the H1N1 outbreak there would have been many more cases and deaths around the world.

The Ministry of Finance will eliminate taxes on medical equipment, medical supplies and imports of alcohol for disinfection.

The Minister of Health announced that the GOM will distribute sanitary guidelines that restaurants, schools and businesses should implement.

MEXICO CITY GOVERNMENT: During a May 4 press conference, the Mexico City government announced that restaurants, cafeterias and all

government offices will re-open on May 6, while museums, libraries and convention centers will re-open on May 7. Bars, discos, sports stadiums and movie theaters will remain closed for the time being. The Mexico City government will advise businesses what precautions they must take when re-opening.

The Mayor of Mexico City announced a new "alert" system which will be used to inform the public about the level of any potential health risks. The system is color coded with green representing the lowest level of risk and red the highest.

### 13. (U) ACTIONS BY NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

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On May 3 the campaigns for the midterm elections kicked off without any public events. Several parties including the governing right-of-center PAN and the opposition left-of-center PRD agreed to yield part of their ad time to the Secretariat of Health for public announcements.

### 14. (SBU) STATISTICS

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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT: Health Secretary Cordova announced in a May 4 morning press conference that the number of confirmed cases now stands at 727 (out of 2164 total cases tested), including 26 fatalities - the latest of which was recorded on April 29. Of the 26 deaths, 16 were women and over half were between 0-19 years old.

STATE BY STATE: 26 states have confirmed cases. Below is the

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state-by-state breakdown of cases compiled by the Secretariat of Health, as of 2000 hrs on May 3. (A state by state breakdown of the May 4 statistics mentioned above is not yet available.)

#### State-by-state Statistics (cases, deaths)

Agguascalientes	5, 0
Baja California	11, 0
Baja California Sur	0, 0
Campeche	0, 0
Chiapas	10, 0
Chihuahua	4, 0
Coahuila	0, 0
Colima	9, 0
Distrito Federal	318, 16
Durango	2, 0
Guanajuato	1, 0
Guerrero	3, 0
Hidalgo	40, 0
Jalisco	0, 0
State of Mexico	76, 4
Michoacan	1, 0
Morelos	0, 0
Nuevo Leon	0, 0
Nayarit	0, 0
Oaxaca	1, 1
Puebla	3, 0
Queretaro	2, 0
Quintana Roo	3, 0
San Luis Potosi	58, 0
Sinaloa	0, 0
Sonora	1, 0
Tabasco	4, 0
Tamaulipas	1, 0
Tlaxcala	19, 1
Veracruz	1, 0
Yucatan	0, 0
Zacatecas	15, 0
Not specified	2, 0
Total	590, 22

### 15. (SBU) MANAGEMENT ISSUES

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Of the 12 samples taken by the Medical Unit from Embassy personnel and EFMs, one case has been confirmed positive, one is probable and two have been confirmed negative. The results of the eight remaining tests are pending.

16. (U) SECURITY ISSUES  
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Nothing new to report.

17. (U) CONSULAR ISSUES  
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Call volume to the Embassy switchboard continues to decline. In the 24 hours through 0700 AM May 4, the switch received only 5 H1N1 related inquiries.

18. (U) CONSULATE ISSUES  
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CIUDAD JUAREZ: No change in the number of confirmed cases of H1N1 in the state of Chihuahua. The Chihuahua State Secretary of Health reported to Post on May 4 that there are four confirmed cases and that this number has not increased since May 2. On May 4, Dr. Hector Puertas, the delegate for the Secretary of Health in Ciudad Juarez, told Post that since the outbreak began there have been a total of 63 possible cases in Ciudad Juarez: 18 tested negative, 8 tested positive for seasonal flu, 2 tested positive for swine flu, and 35 are still pending laboratory results.

GUADALAJARA: Western Mexico remains quiet. There are no reported cases of the H1N1 virus in the state of Jalisco. There are 6

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reported cases in the state of Colima - at the beach town of Manzanillo - all of whom are receiving treatment and recovering, according to media reports. Duty officer has received no calls though the weekend about any ACS cases.

Though traffic is light, businesses are reopening and people are beginning to gather once again in parks and public places through the metropolitan zone. Fewer are wearing precautionary masks and overall there is a sense that the crisis has passed.

HERMOSILLO: In a meeting with Consulate staff and other local participants, the Sonoran Secretary of Health announced May 4 the first confirmed case of H1N1 influenza in the state. The subject is a 15 year old male from Hermosillo, Sonora. His blood sample was one of 15 returned from D.F. yesterday - one week after the sample was sent for testing. The Secretary confirmed that although the youth tested positive, he is currently not showing any adverse effects. The Secretary announced that the youth likely was exposed to H1N1 on a recent trip to either Phoenix or Tucson, AZ. As a result, Sonora is considering passive inspections of southbound travelers coming into the state. This would involve asking individuals health and/or travel-related questions. Subjects who appear ill or considered to be possible carriers would be referred to local medical care. If enacted, passive inspection would begin Tuesday, May 5th. The Secretary also announced that parents across the state will be invited to help clean/decontaminate Sonoran schools beginning May 5th. The consulate has received no calls from AMCITS regarding H1N1 influenza over the past 24 hours.

MERIDA: Hotel occupancy throughout the Yucatan Peninsula remains low. Cancun Airport reports 9 cancelled flights for May 4, all international, but passengers remain calm. The Cancun Airport continues to report a very small volume of arriving passports. Throughout the Peninsula, health checks continue at transportation hubs. Three Merida shopping centers closed May 4 for the day. Schools and cinemas remain closed. Quintana Roo reports three confirmed cases of H1N1. Yucatan reports its first confirmed case

of Type A influenza but test results are still pending for H1N1. Tourism contacts report that while continuing to monitor the situation, their attention is turning to a recuperation plan. The public remains calm but concerned about the long term economic impact of the outbreak.

Consulate and Consular Agency staff and EFMs remain calm. The Consulate remains closed. The Duty officer is receiving very few calls.

MONTERREY: The governments of Nuevo Leon, Coahuila and Zacatecas emphasized that while they do not have any confirmed cases of H1N1 flu, people should continue to take preventive measures. Nuevo Leon has moved to fine four factories which did not close as ordered. In Nuevo Leon, things are starting to return to normal, with more traffic and more patrons in restaurants. Although San Luis Potosi (SLP) has 58 confirmed cases, the state government is sounding the same tone, saying that H1N1 flu has entered a stable phase, but residents should not lower their guard. In contrast, after confirming two cases of the H1N1 virus, the Durango governor declared a maximum health alert, including information how to prevent the H1N1 flu and encouraging face masks.

San Luis Potosi (58 cases) and Durango (2 cases) are the only states in the consular district with confirmed cases of H1N1 flu. Nuevo Leon has investigated 310 possible cases, and found that 259 are not H1N1 flu. In Coahuila, the number of possible cases climbed from 89 to 97. Durango is still investigating 38 possible cases. There are no suspected cases of H1N1 flu among FSO or LES staff or their dependents.

Media reports again emphasized how other countries were inspecting Mexican travelers; flights have been cancelled, and discussed whether schools would open and efforts to sanitize the schools, and the economic impact. There were widespread reports that fear of the flu has dramatically reduced commercial sales, including a 50% drop in sales in Torreon, Coahuila, and economic activity is "paralyzed" in Durango. In Nuevo Leon, basic services continue to operate

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normally, and more people are venturing outside their houses. In addition, many traveled to nearby Texas for the weekend.

NOGALES: There is no change in public reaction. CBP reports normal to light northbound traffic at both Nogales ports of entry. There are no confirmed cases of H1N1 flu in Northern Sonora, but H1N1 is prevalent in border counties in Arizona with six confirmed cases in Pima County, one confirmed case in Yuma County and one confirmed case in Santa Cruz County.

Visa service Visa services are suspended through May 8th, but if services open up sooner, post will contact H2 applicants. ACS services continue with limited service for emergencies and passport/CRBA applications.

NUEVO LAREDO: The public is calm and many people continue to wear face masks. There are still no confirmed cases of H1N1 in Nuevo Laredo but there are nine suspected cases. Restaurants and grocery stores remain open to the public. Bridge traffic to Laredo, TX appear to be lighter than average. A public campaign to promote better sanitation and prevention of the H1N1 virus started today with a meeting between Luis Eduardo Campbell Loa, the Health Director of Nuevo Laredo, Aurelio Uvalle Gallardo, the Director of the Department of Regional Education, and Ramsn Garza Barrios, Mayor of Nuevo Laredo.

TIJUANA: Of 50 samples sent for testing, the number of confirmed cases of H1N1 flu in Baja now stands at 13 (10 in Mexicali, 1 in Ensenada, and 2 in Rosarito). Two patients remain hospitalized in Mexicali and two in Rosarito. Border crossing wait times appeared to return to fairly normal levels for a week day, with waits of more than an hour at Otay Mesa and 1.5 to 2 hours at San Ysidro. According to one tourist business organization (CETURMEX), even

though they remained open, the discos, "dives" and nightspots in the city suffered a 95% drop in business this weekend compared to the previous weekend, probably due to a decline in persons crossing from San Diego. Rosarito was "desolate" over the weekend, including the beaches, due to the lack of tourists. The Duty Officer reports no flu-related calls.

19. (U) MEDIA REACTION/GENERAL POPULATION SENTIMENTS  
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Coverage on May 4 of the H1N1 flu outbreak in the Mexican media focused mostly on the announcement of Secretary of Health Cordova that the outbreak was stabilizing (with 727 cases and 26 deaths) - after its peak on April 28 - and that in preparation for resuming economic activities his agency drafted guidelines for prevention and control of the H1N1 virus for restaurants, public transportation, and the workplace. Secretary Cordova invited business owners to review and enforce the guidelines, which include sanitation tips as well as recommendations of minimum spaces of separation between customers in restaurants and movie theaters. Several media interpreted this as the first signs of recuperation. "We are receiving the first signs of hope. If the government's figures are correct, then the infection rate and the deaths are decreasing... It seems that the government is getting ready to lower the emergency level. Especially because the suspension of business is taking a toll on the economy," stated El Universal's political gossip column Bajo Reserva. Newspaper Milenio's Trascendio echoed, "The good news Secretary Cordova gave us confirmed the rumor that business will resume on May 6 and schools will be reopened on May 11." Many newspapers featured this as the front page story: "Outbreak going down" (El Universal); "Government sets rules to resume business" (Excelsior); "Outbreak numbers drop" (La Cronica); "Businesses reopen on Wednesday" (El Sol de Mexico); "Flu yields" (Rumbo de Mexico). In spite of the "moderate optimism," health officials reminded the population that the outbreak is not over. On Sunday the campaigns for the midterm elections kicked off without any public events. The media reported that some parties took advantage of the outbreak for political gain by distributing surgical masks with the party logo.

10. (U) ECONOMIC IMPACT

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According to press reports, the business sector estimates that the impact of the world recession combined with the H1N1 influenza outbreak will result in a GDP loss of between 4.3 and 5.4%, the worst contraction of the Mexican economy in 13 years. One financial paper predicted that unemployment rates will rise to the highest rate since 1995, trade will drop to its 2006 levels, FDI to its 1999 levels and remittances to its 1996 levels. The National Chamber of Restaurants and Food reports that the restaurant sector has suffered losses up to USD 100 million due to government ordered closures. Government inspectors found that forty-eight percent of businesses in Mexico City did not comply fully with the government's order to close restaurants and non-essential services. In Acapulco, 19 businesses have been fined between USD 800 to USD 4000 dollars.

11. (U) TRANSPORTATION  
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The financial impact of empty planes is leading U.S. and Mexican carriers to reduce capacity on U.S.-Mexico and Mexican domestic routes by cancelling 40% or more of flights. For most U.S. carriers, the reductions will hold through June, and longer if conditions persist. Mexican airlines, dependent on the home market for cash flow, have scheduled down this week but hope to restore service in the days ahead. Airlines will likely request GOM financial assistance, in the form of reduced landing fees and other cost-savers.

Aeromexico averages 17,000 passengers through its Mexico City International Airport (AICM) hub on the first day of long weekends. On 30 April, the first day of the current vacation weekend, the number was 7,000. Aeromexico expected to operate roughly 120

flights (total inbound/outbound) at AICM on 4 May, down from 320 normally. Cancellations were primarily on domestic routes, and Aeromexico's 12-14 daily flights to the U.S. were flying.

Of the 5 largest U.S. carriers serving Mexico, 4 had announced flight cuts as of 4 May. Continental has cut 40% of its aircraft, against a weekly roster Mexico-wide of 450 flights. Continental will reduce service at AICM from 118 flights in/out per week to 78 this week, and 60 the week of 11 May. All 29 stations in Mexico will continue in service. Delta is cutting 40% of its weekly 350 flights to/from Mexico. Delta is likely to suspend service at some of its stations. US Airways is cutting 38% of capacity but will retain service at all 12 of its Mexico stations. United will more than halve its 60 weekly flights, to 24, but keep its 4 stations open. American, which has not yet announced reductions, will do so in coming days.

112. (U) U.S. ASSISTANCE  
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The U.S. Embassy issued a press release May 3 announcing that the USG delivered a total of USD 16 million in assistance to Mexico including a five million dollar donation to the WHO and PAHO, a USD 1 million dollar donation of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits and USD 10 million in Tamiflu. The press release received significant media play, particularly in the print media. The GOM through the Embassy of Mexico in Washington provided the USG with an updated list of requested supplies. The list includes alcoholic gel, goggles, latex and surgical gloves; ventilators liquid soap, syringes.

BASSETT